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HINTS ON THE CARE OF MARTENS.

Traits:

Martens are active, hardy animals which make desirable and make engaging pets. Their fur when prime is thick and soft.

Food:

Wild martens feed largely on rabbits, squirrels, mice, birds, and insects, but in captivity they relish milk, bread, boiled rice, cornmeal and graham mush, table refuse, chicken heads, butchers' scraps, cooked prunes, and other fruits. Large bones with fragments of meat attached are excellent for their teeth. The livers and entrails of small animals designed for martens should be removed, as these organs frequently contain parasites. Fresh water should be supplied daily. Care should be taken to give the animals only as much as will be eaten immediately, for overfeeding is as injurious as underfeeding. Females with young should always be fed twice a day; others may be fed once or twice a day as may be convenient.

Pens:

Pens are best located where partially shaded by trees, and where the animals can occasionally enjoy a sunbath. Each individual must have a pen and a nest box to itself, though after becoming accustomed to captivity and to their quarters it is usually feasible, except while the young are with their mothers, to allow the occupants of several adjoining pens to run together at times by leaving open the connecting doors. This will permit the keeper to judge the preferences of the animals for one another, and thus aid him in mating them satisfactorily. There is always danger, however, that some one of them will suddenly become savage and kill a comrade. In any case, each animal should be fed in its own pen. Convenience and economy require that pens be built in a series, which may be either single or double. They should each be at least 6 by 8 feet on the floor and 8 feet high. The floor should be made of rock or cement or $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mesh galvanized sandscreen, covered with sand or sandy loam, not clay, to a depth of 3 or 4 inches. The walls and top may be made of 1-inch mesh galvanized wire netting, No. 16 wire or larger. A roof to keep out an excess of snow and rain is sometimes desirable. A section of a tree, with branches, set in each pen will be appreciated by these active creatures.

Nest Boxes:

Nest boxes should be weather proof and so placed as always to be in the shade. They should consist of two compartments - the entry to the inner, or nest compartment, being through the outer which is designed to exclude light and draughts of air from the nest. The doorway should be about 5 inches wide and 6 inches high. Nest material will remain in place if the inner entrance is near the top of the partition.

Nest boxes should be detachable from the pens, and so constructed as to be opened for cleaning. Bedding should not include anything which can injure fur, such as burs or chaff.

Breeding:

One male is sufficient for 4 to 6 females. Mating normally occurs in January or February. Clean and replenish the nest for each female prior to the time the young are expected, and do not open it again until the young are able to come out. During this period no noise or other disturbance in the vicinity of the breeding pens should be permitted. In selecting breeding stock consider disposition as well as size and fur.

Diseases:

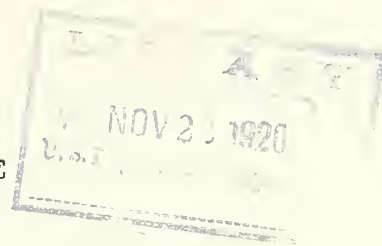
Diseases are easier to avoid than cure. Putrid or otherwise unwholesome food causes indigestion and diarrhea. The excrement of an animal is an index of its health. It should be firm but not dry. Sick animals should be isolated. Animals suffering from colds or pneumonia should be kept warm in quarters which are dry and well ventilated. Intestinal disorders may usually be corrected by a diet of eggs and fresh beef. Wounds when fresh should be treated with turpentine. Sores should be washed daily with castile soap in warm water, and treated with hydrogen peroxide. Insect powder dusted into the fur helps to keep down the number of lice and fleas.

General:

Be sure to see every animal every day. Examine nests frequently. Keep food and water pans clean. Attend to the animals at the same hour each day. Tame them by remaining in their sight as much as possible, and by inducing them to take food from the hand.

Bi-103
Nov. '20

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY



HINTS ON THE CARE OF MARTENS

(Fishers Are Cared for in Much the Same Way.)

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NEST BOXES:

Nest boxes should be weather proof and so placed as always to be in the shade. They should consist of two compartments - the entry to the inner, or nest compartment, being through the outer room which is designed to exclude light and draughts of air from the nest. The doorways should be about 5 inches wide and 6 inches high for martens and 8 inches wide by 10 inches high for fishers. Nest material will remain in place if the inner entrance is near the top of the partition. Nest boxes should be detachable from the pens, and so constructed that they may be opened for cleaning. Bedding should not include anything which can injure fur, such as burs or chaff.

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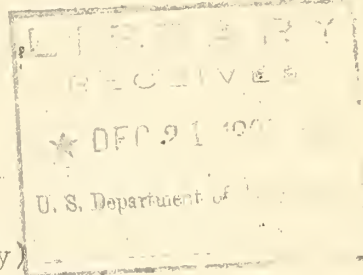
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GENERAL:

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*NOTE.--Information in this leaflet is based on individual experience and on data from sources considered reliable. Experiments are being conducted with martens in captivity, but until fuller and more definite information is available the accuracy of all the statements herein can not be vouched for.

nest compartment, being through the outer room, which is designed to exclude light and draughts of air from the nest. The doorways should be about 5 inches wide and 6 inches high for martens, and 8 inches wide and 10 inches high for fishers. Nest material will remain in place if the inner entrance is near the top of the partition. Nest boxes should be detachable from the pens and so constructed that they may be opened for cleaning. Bedding should not include anything that can injure fur, such as burs or chaff.

BREEDING:

Experimental work in marten breeding thus far indicates that mating occurs in July and August and that the young are whelped in March and April. There is no definite evidence as yet that the young are carried 9 months, but no other breeding period has been detected except that in July and August. During the gestation period the female should not be disturbed.

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GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

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